

**CLAIMS**

1. A method of inputting a character in a portable device having a display screen, comprising:
  - a step of locating a pointer at a predetermined pointer start area on the display
  - 5 screen;
  - a step of sensing the movement of an object which moves being in contact with an optical interface unit of the portable device;
  - a step of inputting a character by moving the pointer from the pointer start area according to the sensed movement; and
  - 10 a step of returning the pointer to the pointer start area according to the input of the character.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein in the step of returning the pointer to the pointer start area according to the input of the character, the pointer is returned to the
- 15 pointer start area in case that it is sensed that the object has ended the contact with the optical interface unit.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein in the step of inputting a character by moving the pointer from the pointer start area according to the sensed movement, the character
- 20 is inputted in case that a character located at the area in which the pointer has moved is selected by a user.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein:
  - in the step of sensing the movement of an object which moves being in contact
  - 25 with an optical interface unit of the portable device, the movement is sensed by measuring at least one of the speed and the distance of the movement of the object; and
  - in the step of inputting a character by moving the pointer from the pointer start area according to the sensed movement, the pointer is moved in response to at least one of the measured speed and distance.
- 30 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of maintaining a database in which at least one character image and character data are recorded corresponding to

each other,

wherein the step of inputting a character by moving the pointer from the pointer start area according to the sensed movement comprises:

a step of generating a character image corresponding to the sensed movement;

5 a step of identifying and extracting character data corresponding to the generated character image from the database; and

a step of displaying the extracted character data on the display screen.

6. A computer readable recording medium in which a program for executing the  
10 method of any one of the claims 1 through 5 is recorded.

7. A portable device capable of inputting characters, comprising:

a display unit for displaying a predetermined character or a pointer on a predetermined display screen;

15 an optical interface unit contacting with a predetermined object, emitting an optical signal to the object, and receiving an optical reflection signal reflected from the object;

an optical signal sensing unit sensing the movement of the object by interpreting the received optical reflection signal and; and

20 a pointer control unit locating the pointer at a pointer start area on the display screen, inputting a character by moving the pointer from the pointer start area according to the sensed movement, and returning the pointer to the pointer start area according to the input of the character.

25 8. The portable device of claim 7, wherein the pointer control unit returns the pointer to the pointer start area in case that it is sensed that the object has ended the contact with the optical interface unit.

9. The portable device of claim 7, further comprising:

30 a database maintaining at least one character image and character data corresponding to the character image;

a character image generating unit generating a pointer character image

corresponding to the sensed movement; and

a character identifying/extracting unit identifying a character image corresponding the pointer character image from the database and extracting character data corresponding to the identified character image.

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10. The portable device of claim 7, wherein the optical interface unit comprises a predetermined object surface to which the optical signal is transmitted, a lens, and an image surface, the object surface, the lens, and the image surface are horizontally disposed.